

What does it take to succeed in business?

Countless volumes have been written on what makes a businessperson successful. While each has its own angle, most acknowledge that it's a combination of key traits. According to one expert on the subject, it takes a mix of intuition, wisdom, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurial giftedness and managerial talent.

Larisa Shavinina, an internationally renowned professor of management at the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*, points out that the brightest names in business can pull from an array of entrepreneurial tools at their disposal.

"When Michael Dell decided to expand his young computer company internationally, they told him he was out of his mind," she says. Yet Dell's first international expansion was to the United Kingdom in 1987 and the business was profitable from its very first days.

According to Shavinina, all but one of the 22 reporters at the press

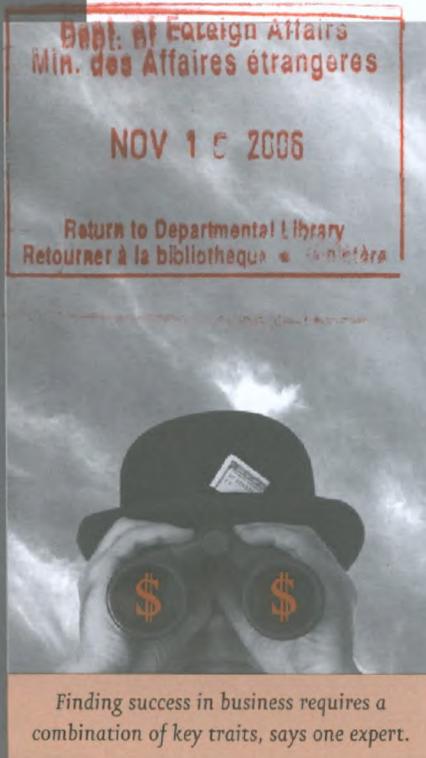
conference announcing Dell's expansion predicted failure. They said it was a bad idea, that the direct business model was an American invention that would not work in other countries. Even Dell employees believed it was silly.

So what does Dell's success say about leadership? In his own words, the lesson is "believe in what you're doing. If you've got an idea that's really powerful, you've just got to ignore the people who tell you it won't work, and hire people who embrace your vision."

Shavinina says that it was also tough going for other business superstars, like Sony's Akio Morita.

Morita could not find American distributors for Sony products—the same line of products that later included Sony's ubiquitous (and profitable) Walkman. "Sony's Walkman is one of the best examples," says Shavinina. "It emerged despite strong market research

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Finding success in business requires a combination of key traits, says one expert.

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